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ABSTRACT

The second of three booklets deals with organizational procedures in schools that tend to channel girls and boys into different programs. Examples are presented of some current practices that limit and some that increase a student's options. The examples concern classrooms, students' personal lives, academic and vocational study, extracurricular activities, and physical education and athletics. (Author/MLF)

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Sex Equality in School

Volume V

AASA Executive Handbook Series

American Association of School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
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$2.50

April, 1975

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This report from the AASA Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education is the second in a series of three executive handbooks designed to be helpful to you and your colleagues as you move toward this goal. This second booklet deals with organizational procedures in the school which tend to channel girls and boys into different programs; the first, with educational materials; and the third, with the roles of women and men in educational administration.

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FOREWORD

The American Association of School Administrators has long sought the full development of the human resources of the nation and equal educational opportunities for all. Its primary policy document, *The Platform*, states:

"A. As citizens of the United States of America, we believe —

"7. That the strength of the nation and the welfare of humanity will depend upon the conservation and intelligent development of human and natural resources."

and . . ."C. In order that these principles may be realized, we as school administrators propose to work for —

"8. The elimination of barriers that prevent full access to equal educational opportunities for all children and the provision of educational leadership in eliminating discrimination against any segment of our society."

The AASA Executive Committee believes in the AASA platform and must implement programs to achieve the goals it sets forth. Consequently, from the strong policy positions above, the Committee has led the organization to act affirmatively to seek more equity for women and girls in education.

This Executive Handbook is the second of three publications to be issued on the topic. They are designed to:

- Intensify in the administrator an awareness of the problem.
- Describe some current practices that frustrate the full development of human resources and deny equal educational opportunity.
- Identify remedies to correct the condition.
- Suggest administrative action appropriate to eradication of the condition.

American education must be in the forefront of the endeavor to develop all human talent, wherever it is to be found. To fail to do so threatens our very survival. This handbook is part of a serious effort to deal with a deep-seated condition so bound by tradition that to most of us it seems natural.

Salmon's first law is "A problem's no problem unless it's your problem." Our effort here is to make you aware that the problem is *yours* and *you* are uniquely situated to help eradicate it. Let's get it done!

Paul B. Salmon
Executive Director
AASA

INTRODUCTION

The eyes of the nation not too long ago were turned toward a determined young tennis star and the brash, self-confident fellow player she challenged. Few of us missed, either, what at first appeared to be a surprising statement made unabashedly by a hulking, professional football player about his satisfaction from creating needlepoint. A suburban Washington, D.C. high school has held its annual letter dinner and presented the athlete of the year award to a female student. One of the larger airlines in the country now finds itself hiring as many men as women to serve as flight attendants on its planes. A major American railroad has proudly proclaimed in a TV commercial its record of achievement and service and the contributions made by its female employees — locomotive engineers, executives, and others.

People in increasing numbers are re-examining traditional roles of men and women in society and scrutinizing sex stereotyping with fresh interest and new points of view. When a question is raised about the possibility of pursuing interests formerly presumed to be the sacred sole domain of the other gender, more and more the reply is "why not?"

Schools, too, in increasing numbers are looking to themselves and asking some new and thoughtful questions:

- What roles has the school played in reinforcing sex sterotyping?
- Have girls and boys been denied opportunities because of their gender?
- What aspects of the school program need to be re-examined?
- What can the schools do to open up equal opportunities for both girls and boys?
- How can the schools overcome societal customs that have thwarted equality?

The schools have tremendous power to help young people overcome the damaging effects of traditional but unfounded assumptions about sex roles. In some cases, where inequities have been called to attention and the schools have resisted putting this ability into action, charges have been filed against them. Legal precedents have been established for ending:

- Discriminatory entrance requirements for elite academic high schools.
- Discriminatory assignment to vocational classes.
- Lack of equal educational opportunity in athletic programs.[1]

In addition, opponents of discrimination can now call on the legal and financial provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as well as state statutes and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. As legal rights are clarified and legal precedents set, more and more school districts will move ahead to comply voluntarily.

In many districts when presented with evidence of discrimination, school authorities immediately took the initiative to correct wrongdoings. School boards and superintendents, working with interested people from their communities, have committed human and financial resources for change. They have collected data, analyzed their instructional materials, re-examined course restrictions and organizational procedures. And they have established inservice education programs for teachers to help them overcome discriminatory practices.

The first major step toward creating sex equality in any school district is to provide freedom of choice and to encourage students to pursue individualized courses of study — academic, vocational, recreational — that interest them, regardless of previous "male" or "female" labels. More and more, students will come to recognize that pursuing careers as a carpenter, executive, chef, and secretary, track champion, physicist, nurse, and basketball player aren't restricted to one gender. They will see, too, that it's gratifying to explore all kinds of learning, that it's useful for everybody to know how to be self sufficient while living alone, that everyone can get

some satisfaction from making things -- and that what to make is a personal, not a sex-determined, decision. Courses will be changed to make them suitable for people, not for girls only or for boys only. Increasingly, students will be encouraged to pursue their own interests and to seek their own identities, regardless of gender. And school administrators will be looking anew at the basic purposes of education and asking themselves whether the opportunities provided for individual growth and development are indeed equal.

In this booklet, you'll find examples of some current practices that limit and some that increase a student's options. The examples are arranged in five groups — classrooms, students' personal lives, academic and vocational study, extracurricular activities, and physical education and athletics.

Classroom

At present, many schools reflect a vision of society that grows further and further from reality. Their students, both female and male, have to choose from just half the course and extracurricular options possible. Men point out the ways they're hurt by this limitation, ranging from stunted personal relationships to incidences of stress diseases and needless competition. And women call attention to severely limited options — often those the men don't want.

Although most girls entering school have already learned the importance of pleasing others and being docile and "lady-like," they do aspire to achieve during the elementary years. The boys in the early grades often run into trouble when they continue to be the exuberant, active creatures society and family have encouraged them to be. As the children themselves say, "Girls are kinder, boys fight more." Later, however, girls are led to believe that successfully competing with boys will make them unpopular, that to be attractive and loved they should be supportive and dependent on others. Many then cease aspiring and achieving after the fifth or sixth grades.[2] Society, and the school reflectively, discourage their will to succeed — to outthink or outperform male students.

Limiting Practices

Some classroom practices contribute to these kinds of distinction. First of all, in many classrooms, pupils are actually segregated by sex. Often, the segregation is simple and explicit — "Boys line up over here . . . " "Now the girls' spelling team . . . " "Boys go get your coats . . . " "If you don't behave yourself, you'll have to go sit with the girls!"

There have been extreme examples such as providing an all-male kindergarten and an all-male first grade where there were more interest areas and less seatwork, a lot of science equipment, live animals, and typewriters to stimulate writing. And another where: "With boys, we employ more science materials and experiments. There is more emphasis on building things and on studies of transportation . . . Mold can be studied from a medical standpoint by boys and in terms of cooking by girls . . . For girls we use quieter games, fairy stories, and games and songs which emphasize activities such as sewing and housekeeping. For boys, we use more active physical games which involve noise and muscle movement and are based on a transportation theme . . . " Not surprisingly, this program was more successful, and more popular, with boys than with girls.[3]

Teachers' language often doesn't help matters. Many teachers address their students as "boys and girls," when they could just say "children," "class," "people," "students," "everyone." Generalizations like "I'm a woman, so I can change my mind," "Big boys don't cry," or "I know you girls like to gossip," simply perpetuate stereotypes, and asking for "two strong boys" to help with books or audiovisual equipment, even in grades when many girls are stronger, can further the development of warped perceptions.

Differences in academic expectations show up early. In kindergarten, the females may be encouraged to dress up and pretend to cook, clean house, or go to the grocery. Meanwhile the boys are using machines and building blocks. Later on, girls are expected to do well in spelling and grammar and to have neat handwriting and boys are expected to excel in math and do well in science. They get more attention than girls, whether it's criticism, individual help,

praise, or encouragement to be creative. Criticism of girls is more likely to be personal, that of boys to be task-oriented.[4]

One young mother, sending her daughter off to school for the first time, raised some very different questions than she had about her son the year before. In a letter to the editor of a local newspaper column devoted to such exchange, she raised such questions as —

> . . . Will her teacher understand that she simply must do a cartwheel or a headstand every fifteen minutes or expire? That she is used to singing all day long, not just on cue? Will someone reprimand my budding ballerina? Silence my songbird? Will she be strong enough for that first painful realization that there are those in the world who will not return the love she pours out so indiscriminately now on people and pets, bugs and flowers, serenely sure that all love her in return?
>
> And then the worst fears of all. Will someone, some well-meaning teacher, classmate, counselor along the way, dare limit her aspirations, dampen her dauntlessness? She's been lovingly raised to believe that girls are people, with the same bright prospects of boy people. On alternate days she wants to be a stewardess or a veterinarian, a dancer or a ball-player. All things are equally possible. Can she survive the inevitable insinuations that some occupations are more ladylike than others, and ladylike is a desirable thing to be?
>
> What will she make of all those mommies in her school-books who wear aprons and are waiting in the kitchen with homemade cookies when their children get home from school? Her mommy sometimes gets home after she does, with a headache and a pile of papers to grade and nothing in the refrigerator bad enough in the oven. Will she wish she had a mommy like those school-book mommies?
>
> I watched her racing up the sidewalk to school in the outfit she'd solemnly chosen for her first day. Bluejeans and fingernail polish, Bud-man T-shirt and her favorite play pearls. Her hopes are so high, her future so fine. Please, please everyone out there. Don't rain on her parade.[5]

Equitable Practices

Differences in treatment of girls and boys reflect assumptions that the society of the United States has only recently begun to question. Schools, the one place above all others where people should be afforded equal opportunity, are in a unique position to identify inequalities where they exist, and to work toward their eradication. Limitations are unfair to everyone, and the schools can help students examine what they are assuming about sex roles and analyze their validity.

Here are some things teachers can do:

- Examine, first, their own assumptions about traditional roles and constantly be alert to stereotyping.

- Bring out children's assumptions. Ask them to put the ending on generalizations about women and men, or sentences about their own ambitions and plans. Ask them whether certain occupations are male or female. Ask them what they think are characteristics of their own or the other sex.

- Ask them where they got these assumptions. Assign them to study the presentation of men/women and boys/girls on TV; in newspapers, magazines, and comic books; in movies; in textbooks and library books; in toy packaging and picture books for small children; in popular music.

- Ask them whether or not these presentations are fair or are true about women and men in the community, in the nation, and in the world. Ask men and women who have nontraditional jobs to come and talk to the class.

- In class role-playing, give children roles that aren't traditional for their own gender. Discuss what society would be like if women's and men's roles were reversed — a mirror image or completely different?

- Ask students to find out and think of reasons sex stereotypes developed, and reasons they persist. Ask them to look at other cultures and study the differences.

- Discuss the effects of social expectations on individual behavior — e.g., embarrassment during adolescence; boredom, pressures, or frustration.

- Encourage students to help one another, in both schoolwork and games, to cooperate with their teammates.

- Use cross-sex grouping.

- Assign teams to compete against a standard or their own record.

- Use educational materials that are free of sex sterotypes. (See AASA Executive Handbooks series #4, *Sex Equality in Educational Materials.*)

- Set up inservice training programs for teachers to raise their own consciousness. University schools of education or women's studies departments as well as local task forces can help you with this.

Student/Family Life Styles

The stereotype of the U.S. family includes a mother who works in the home, a father who works outside the home, and children — perhaps a son and a daughter. If you act on this stereotype, however, you'll be treating more than half of your students as misfits. Fewer than half the school-age children in the United States live with both parents, and more than half the children in school have mothers who work outside the home.[6]

In such a situation, to assume that mothers will be available for school open house, meetings, or conferences with teachers during the day or that fathers will be available for Father's Night or a Father-Daughter Picnic, may lead to assumed "lack of parent interest" and needless embarrassment for children who can't produce the required parent.

In preparation for such events —

- Investigate the most convenient times for parents to come to school before planning an event or asking for a conference.

- Plan events for heads of households or for students' guests rather than for mothers or for fathers.

- Provide care for pupils' younger sisters and brothers when heads of households come to the school for either group or individual meetings. Consider going to the home to visit when the head of household cannot come to the school.

The Student Parent Drain

Many students are parents themselves, and many teenage women who are mothers or who are pregnant drop out of school. In fact, pregnancy is the major known cause of female teenage drop outs. Though many schools provide special programs for young mothers or pregnant students, they can often receive only home, evening or special school education, and have difficulty arranging for child care.[7]

Even in the districts that have excellent programs, combined with medical attention and child care studies, many girls still drop out, because they don't know about these programs, are reluctant to try to continue their education, or their lives are changing in so many ways they just cannot manage it. Yet girls can't afford to quit school any more than boys can. Only 1 in 10 women will never work — half will work as long as 30 years.[8] Young mothers, in particular, will probably need to support themselves and their children. If they are married their husbands are usually under 21, in the age groups with the highest unemployment. Marriages of people under 18 are 3 or 4 times more likely than others to end in divorce.[9]

So it's very important to encourage students who are pregnant or who have children to stay in school. Furthermore, the school will want to offer them some special help.

- They need counseling on the importance to them of education.

- They need day care facilities.
- They need confidence that they won't be shamed or ridiculed, and reassurance in dealing with unpleasant incidents.
- They may need immediate vocational training to help them meet new responsibilities.
- They also need support from qualified staff members who are sensitive to their special problems.

Academic and Vocational Study

Before entering school, children are already socialized about the nature of their gender and what is expected of them. The young girl is encouraged to be winsome, gracious, and polite — to aspire to marry an architect or a pilot — not to be one. The young boy is taught, often bullied, into believing he is not "all boy" if he isn't tough, boisterous, and adventurous and that he won't go far in this world without study and hard work. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Most all the adults with whom children come into contact perceive their life goals in stereotyped male/female roles. Few adults raise questions about whether or not they naturally belong in these molds.

> From the day a newborn child is dressed in pink, she is given "special" treatment. Perhaps because they are thought to be more fragile, six-month-old infant girls are actually touched, spoken to, and hovered over more by their mothers while they are playing than are infant boys . . .
>
> Research even shows that mothers smile, touch, and talk to their female infants more than their male infants as early as two days of age! Differential treatment of the sexes can't start much earlier than that!

As children grow older, boys are encouraged to be aggressive, competitive, and independent, whereas girls continue to be rewarded, especially by their fathers, for being passive and dependent . . .

Little boys climb trees and get dirty; little girls are expected to stay in the yard and keep their dresses clean. Little boys play with water pistols and fire trucks; little girls play with dolls and tea sets. Little "men" fight back; little girls cry and run. Little boys visit daddy's office while little girls help mommy bake a cake. And we know of at least one little girl whose goal of becoming a doctor was quickly "corrected" by her first grade teacher: every little boy in the class got to play the part of doctor in the class play; every little girl got to play the role of nurse.[10]

Perhaps it is "only fair" to counsel a girl away from a field in which relatively few females have been able to make careers. The effect, however, is the same as that of conscious malice — the nation chooses from among half the talent available, and many gifted people spend their lives in work that doesn't employ their greatest ability.

The socialization of the American male has closed off certain options for him too. Men are discouraged from developing certain desirable traits such as tenderness and sensitivity just as surely as women are discouraged from being assertive and "too bright." Young boys are encouraged to be incompetent at cooking and child care just as surely as young girls are urged to be incompetent at mathematics and science. The elimination of sex-role stereotyping implies that each individual would be encouraged to "do his own thing." Men and women would no longer be stereotyped by society's definitions of masculine and feminine. If sensitivity, emotionality, and warmth are desirable *human* characteristics, then they are desirable for men as well as for women. If independence, assertiveness, and serious intellectual commitment are desirable *human* characteristics, then they are desirable for women as well as for men. And, it is undoubtedly true that many men today would have been more fulfilled if their socialization had

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permitted them to engage in activity currently sterotyped as female — child care, for example.

> Thus, it is true that a man's options are also limited by our society's sex-role ideology, but as the "predictability test" reveals, it is still the woman in our society whose identity is rendered irrevelevant by America's socialization practices.[11]

Counselors and others who advise students about courses, further education, and careers need to overcome the effects of societal conditioning as well as recognized sex-biased aptitude tests and career information materials.

A woman who has always assumed that she must choose from among just a few traditional, "female" occupations can't make a free, informed decision.

More and more women are joining the labor force and career opportunities for all persons are expanding. The schools must reflect these changes, indeed must move beyond current practice and encourage **all** students to seek opportunities in any fields of their choice. The job market these students face will be quite different than the one faced by their parents and the law protects each person's right to compete in these careers previously reserved for either male or female.

Labor statistics now tell us that during their lifetimes 90 percent of girls in school today will work outside the home.[12] Many of them undoubtedly will devote a good many years to full-time child rearing and homemaking. But to assume that this will be their only lifetime pursuits and not to encourage them to acquire skills and understandings needed for contingent careers outside the home does injustice to the part-time homemaker as well as to the full-time career pursuer. Both men and women should have exposure to courses in child care, home and auto ownerships, household management, basic health care, nutrition, budgeting and consumer education.

Men have an equal stake and equal needs when they undertake establishing a home, rearing children, and pursuing careers. To

perpetuate the old myths of choices limited because of an individual's sex is an injustice to both.

> Another social change contributing to the continuing increase in the percentage of women employed is the rising education level. The more highly educated a woman is, the more likely she is to work. Seventy-five percent of women aged 20-54 with only a grade school education have worked at some time in their lives. Eighty-five percent of women who attended high school but did not graduate have worked. Ninety percent of women high school graduates who did not attend college have worked. Ninety-three percent of those who attended college and ninety-six percent of college graduates have worked. In fact, ever having worked is more closely correlated with education than it is with age, number of children, family income or any other variable associated with current employment status. This probably reflects a difference in employability. More highly educated women can, in general, get better jobs and therefore employment is more attractive to them.[13]

Course Offerings

Courses of study labeled "Cooking for seventh-grade girls" "Physics for girls" or "Bachelor living for boys" are obviously restrictive in enrollment. Course prerequisites may achieve the same effect as explicit restrictions, if they are either waived or invoked, depending on the applicant's gender. A ninth-grade cooking course with prerequisites of seventh- and eighth-grade cooking (not open to boys) may waive these prerequisites for a female transfer student but invoke them if a boy tries to sign up. Or a student of one sex may be required to meet higher standards for course entry than are students of the other sex.

Implicit restrictions take other forms. A girl who wants to take a course in metalwork, for example, may find the difficulties almost insurmountable, even if the course is theoretically open to all, when school officials are raising discouraging questions about why she really wants to take the course and the difficulties she will encounter in a "messy" environment. Then when she gets into shop — or physics or drafting or calculus — she may still face hostility from the

instructor or from male classmates who do not want female competition.

Sex equality in job opportunities is now mandated by the law, and more and more women will be seeking employment in fields previously dominated by men. Not only are many of these jobs more satisfying, but most of them pay more than traditional female occupations. Vocational schools charged with preparing students for future careers will be reexamining their course offerings to eliminate any discriminatory practices that may prevail. Separate schools or broader opportunities and more electives for boys than for girls just do not make sense any more — if they ever did. Girls will no longer be satisfied with choices limited to secretarial skills, beauty culture, and practical nursing.

In 1972, 3 out of every 4 girls in vocational education programs were in homemaking or secretarial courses. Boys were more likely to be trained for unionized jobs which in general have greater compensation and more security than others. Sometimes girls were excluded from such training on the grounds that they could not get into the unions. Now, however, many unions are opening their doors and saying that they would welcome "qualified" women.

On the other hand, boys have been denied full opportunity too. Their home economics courses have been limited to ones like "Bachelor Cooking" — the kind of cooking you do while devoting your real energies to another career. Boys generally have not been expected to take courses like Child Care.

Parity

You will eradicate most of the problem by opening all courses and all schools to both sexes. In addition —

- Old texts and career guidance materials can be replaced or supplemented to counteract sex stereotyping. (See AASA Executive Handbook series #4, *Sex Equality in Educational Materials.*)

- Up-to-date information on changing career patterns can give students a more equitable base from which to make choices.

- Counselors can help students recognize and encourage them to take courses that once were "not for you" but that do indeed fit the student's plans and interests.

- Courses on the role of women in society — past and present and in different cultures — can be helpful to male and female students to understand changing relationships.

- Changing the name of the course can show its relevance to both sexes. (One district's redesigned home economics course is now called "Human Ecology.") You probably *will* have to change the course to fit its new name.

- A course that's considered inappropriate for one sex should be eliminated or revised; it's probably inappropriate for the other sex as well. It is appropriate, of course, for all students to prepare for careers, and to learn household management. But it's not appropriate, for example, to spend much school time teaching people to attract the other sex.

- Courses may be offered in which students study and analyze *sex role identification* as contrasted to *sex role stereotyping*. Such courses may examine why role identification is necessary, why sex role stereotyping occurs, and what functions they serve.

- Teachers and counselors — and every adult in the school — can provide an invaluable service to female students by helping them see themselves as equal, unique individuals free of traditional stereotypes.

Extracurricular Activities

Traditionally, extracurricular activities have been designed chiefly to amplify and reinforce students' preparation for what society considered masculine or feminine roles. Boys' activities were often devoted to developing physical strength, leadership, and inquisitiveness. Girls' activities were supportive and most often domestic.

Street patrols and hall patrols in many localities were all male, as a result of the protective feeling towards females — something could happen to them in the street, or even in the hall. During the elementary years, however, many girls are more mature, bigger, and stronger than boys. A situation in which girls cannot take care of themselves is unsafe for boys as well.

Scientific clubs and competitions encourage independent thought and creativity in problem solving. Too often, advisers encourage such qualities only in boys. Whether by tradition or design, girls have not participated as freely as they might have. The unfairness of such programs is compounded when the school gives credit for participation in them.

Special interest clubs have tended to reflect society and society's definition of the interests and capabilities of men and women. Sex stereotyping has been reinforced by exclusive male or female membership, and opportunities consequently are curtailed. Especially today, as the work week shortens and labor saving devices make leisure time more plentiful for all people, the schools have an even greater opportunity to expand students' extracurricular activities and develop interests that can be carried over into adult life. All students will profit from participation in a wide variety of programs — especially from trying out nontraditional interests.

More options

Again, simply opening extracurricular activities to students of both sexes is a great first step. After that —

- Make sure everybody knows that the activities are open.

- Ask teachers to look for students' special talents or interests and to encourage students to join groups in their fields of interest. They should make plain that artistic work is *not* just for "girls and sissies," and hiking or camping is *not* just for "boys and tomboys."

- Hold extracurricular group meetings at times and places that are convenient for all students, including those who have jobs and those who are bused.

- Try to attract students of both sexes to service clubs to work with older people, hospital patients, and children in orphanages.

Physical Education and Athletics

Innate physical capabilities vary more within each sex than between the sexes. "A number of females are stronger than many males; many men are less enduring than some women."[14] When Sir Edmund Hillary climbed Mount Everest, a 90-pound woman carried a 100-pound pack as far as the last camp for him. Yet the female's strength and capacities are not generally understood, so girls have often been deprived of the chance, available to boys, to develop strength, coordination, and skills. At the same time, boys are subjected to intense physical competition. In too many instances, all but a very few females have been excluded from the serious training and attention given athletic team members. Opportunities to develop good physical health habits, to engage in lifetime sports, and to learn the benefits of both have not been available on an equal basis.

Sex-oriented differentiations begin when physical education classes are separated, if not before. It soon becomes evident that girls' teams and physical education classes get second choice in facilities, equipment, and dressing rooms. Females may never have a chance to use outdoor playing fields except in early fall and late spring. They may get tennis courts, tracks, gyms, and basketball

courts at hours or seasons when the boys don't have them — and be asked to give the gym back to the boys on rainy spring days.

Girls' athletic teams have fewer chances to compete with teams from other schools. The games they do schedule receive less advance publicity and less coverage than the boys' games. Any event in which the sex of the participants is not mentioned is automatically assumed to be an all male event. A school's having 35 pep rallies for boys' events, 16 combined, and 4 for girls' events is far from unusual. Girls' varsity letters may be smaller or they may not get letters at all, and they're not likely to be invited to the Letterman's Banquet. The most common way for a girl to achieve status through athletics is to become a cheerleader for the boys' teams.

When a girls' team goes on the road, the team members almost invariably have to pay for some or all of their expenses. This means they do not travel much. Furthermore, they often get less coaching. In one district, for example, the 16-boy wrestling team has two coaches and the 25-girl gymnastics team has one. Furthermore, *female* coaches are often paid less than the boys' male coaches. The woman coaches may be and probably are as able and dedicated, but the *dollar* value of the coaching each girl athlete receives is far less than each boy's.

In fact, for every dollar spent on high school boys' athletics, girls' programs generally get a dime or less.[15] Gate receipts from boys' football and basketball games (and sometimes the money from refreshment sales by girls' auxiliary organizations) pay for some uniforms, officials, travel and equipment. They do not, however, pay for $320,000 football fields; like a $22,000 girls' hockey field, that has to come out of the budget.

Establishing Equity

A few changes will go a long way toward correcting inequities.

- Provide equal opportunities for all students.
- Encourage them to participate.

- Provide proportionately equal facilities or share available facilities on a proportionate basis.

- Make equal arrangements for uniforms.

- Reimburse coaches and physical education staff members without regard to gender.

- Provide equal press or media coverage for both female and male activities.

- Provide the same quality travel arrangements for all teams' events.

- Make sure all students know about your efforts to provide equal opportunities, and solicit their suggestions about their interests.

Once these improvements take place, equalization in terms of interest, participation and recognition, will follow almost effortlessly.

The School District Climate

Promoting equality is everybody's business. But you, the school administrator, are in a unique position to provide the leadership, to set the tone for creating sex equality in your district. As you examine your programs and continue to work toward increasing options for everyone, a few questions are suggested:

- Are you fair and equal in your treatment and attitude toward female and male students?

- Do you offer equal opportunities for both?

- Are you alert to language patterns and subtle putdowns or neglect of the female? (We are all guilty of this, male and female alike.)

- Do you engage primarily in substantive dialogue with male staff members and in trivialities with females? (Some of each makes life more interesting and demonstrates nonsexist respect.)

- Have you thought about involving parents, students, and other interested people in evaluating your schools for sex equality? (A big boost for everybody.)

- Have you provided inservice programs for *all* staff members, including professional and nonprofessional? (They're all part of the child's school scene.)

- Are you, as the school administrator, participating *yourself* — not just delegating the responsibility?

- Are you working with other community groups to promote sex and ethnic equality? Opportunities of great value are often available to support such programs. For example, one architectural firm expanded its own broadly based affirmative action program to work with the schools in several cities in encouraging students' interests in architecture among minorities and women who otherwise might not have considered architecture.

- Have you sought help from such women's groups as the National Council of Administrative Women in Education, the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women, the Women's Equity Action League, and State Commissions on the Status of Women?

- Have you asked your students about discrimination from their points of view?

- How do you pass information along to them about their rights as students?

- What kinds of action have you taken to promote equality?

- What are you doing to keep your board informed about your efforts to promote equality? About the Title IX guidelines and their implications?

- How do you rate your schools for equality?

In Conclusion

With the accelerated rate of change, no one can predict with infallible accuracy what the future will be like — only that change is a constant companion. This places an increasingly heavy burden on the school's ability to help students learn to live wisely and peacefully in an unknown future society. One way to increase the likelihood of success is to increase the options for girls/women — an underutilized resource we can no longer afford to waste.

People in this country have traditionally turned to the schools to help resolve their social problems. Overcoming sex stereotyping, providing equal opportunity, and encouraging the recognition and development of individual (rather than racial or sexual) differences is a formidable task for all people and society's combined institutions. The school's role is not small. And it can be very potent.

No simple set of guidelines can be applied wholesale to the eradication of sex inequalities in the schools. Changing attitudes and how students perceive themselves is a slow, continuing process. But simply opening up opportunities for all students to participate equally is a first big step. When students come to school —

Let them be concerned with that which makes them free from artificial barriers — whether it be on the playground, a situation in the organization of the school, or some incident in literature or history.

Let an honest curiosity be cultivated in all students. Let them be inquisitive about everything they feel and see, and explore everything that is singular and rare. See that no restraining bounds in books, subjects, or courses of learning are imposed. Encourage them to explore many alternative areas of interest.

Let them be curious in their search for reasons why this or that happened or a particular procedure was followed, but let them be seasoned to submit to truth whenever they have found it.

Let them thoroughly sift through everything they read or each parcel of information that comes to their attention and seek more than one authority for substantiation of a fact or truth.

Let them put every lesson they have learned into practice whenever and wherever possible so that they learn at an early age the subtle art of transposing learning into living.

Let them laugh and play and strive to excel in ability and vigor, for the youthful spirit that is bridled and curbed and that does not have a chance to try and prove its strength is soon dull and stagnant—more fitted for subjugation than for probing into new domains.

And let them *all* do these things — freely and openly — giris and boys alike.[16]

FOOTNOTES

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3. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

4. National Education Association. *Sex Role Stereotyping in the Schools.* Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1973. p. 3.

5. *Arkansas Gazette,* September 15, 1974.

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11. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

12. Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, *loc. cit.*

13. Steiger, JoAnn M. *Vocational Preparation for Women: A Critical Analysis.* Springfield, Illinois: State Board of Vocational Education and Rehabilitation, December, 1974. pp. 6-7.

14. Ulrich, Celeste. "She Can Play As Good As Any Boy." *Phi Delta Kappan,* October 1973. p. 113.

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